



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Interim Protocol on the Usage of Masks/Face Coverings Updated and effective Monday, January 3, 2022

1. Purpose

This document outlines the usage of masks/face coverings by all municipal employees of the City of Newton effective Monday, January 3, 2022.

The City is updating this Protocol to reflect the need for increased health and safety measures for employees given the third COVID-19 surge of infections and the emergence of the highly contagious Omicron COVID-19 variant.

2. Applicability

This Protocol applies to all municipal employees of the City of Newton.

3. Protocol

Wearing a high-quality, well-fitting mask is an essential part of the layered risk reduction strategy to prevent COVID-19 transmissions. In keeping with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, all employees must use mask/face coverings in the following ways:

- a. A mask/face covering must be worn by all municipal employees of the City of Newton, regardless of vaccination status, while working.
- b. This mask/face covering protocol applies when an employee is working in a City building and when working in a non-City Building.
- c. Employees may only remove their mask/face covering when alone in a private workspace, including cubicles, offices, and vehicles, or when actively eating or drinking. When an employee removes a mask/face covering when eating or drinking, it is strongly recommended that employees maintain an appropriate social distance from others.
- d. Employees working outside must wear a mask/face covering when interacting directly with others when social distancing is not possible.
- e. Masks/face coverings must be appropriate for work and must not have any messaging. The City retains the right to require an employee to use a City-issued face mask if the employee's personal one is deemed not appropriate for work.
- f. Any employee who is unable to wear a mask/face covering due to a medical condition may make a request for exemption from this Protocol with the Department of Human Resources.

4. Resources:

For assistance regarding the interpretation of this protocol, please contact the Human Resources Department at 617-796-1260 or by email at HR@newtonma.gov.

For assistance regarding CDC or DPH guidelines, contact the Department Health and Human Services at 617-796-1420.

Employees in need of a face covering should contact their supervisor or department head, who then shall make a request to the Department of Public Buildings.

Please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website for additional guidance relating to the most effective way to select and use a mask/face covering. The CDC website is www.cdc.gov but additional detailed information can be found on their website for "effective masks" at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/effective-masks.html.

Questions and Answers listed below.

Interim Protocols on the Usage of Masks/Cloth Covering
Effective January 3, 2022
Questions and Answers

Q: What kind of mask/face covering is the most effective?

A: When choosing a mask, look at how well it fits, how well it filters the air, and how many layers it has. Make sure your mask fits snugly against your face. Gaps can let air with respiratory droplets leak in and out around the edges of the mask. Pick a mask with layers to keep your respiratory droplets in and others' out. A mask with layers will stop more respiratory droplets getting inside your mask or escaping from your mask if you are sick. Choose a mask with a nose wire. Nose wires prevent air from leaking out of the top of the mask. Bend the nose wire over your nose to fit close to your face. Use a cloth mask that has multiple layers of fabric or wear a disposable mask underneath a cloth mask. Visit the CDC website listed in the Resources section of this Protocol for detailed guidance on selecting and wearing a safe and effective mask/face covering.

Q: When should I wear my mask or face covering?

A: You should wear a mask/face covering at all times, when working. This includes when working in a City building or in a Non-city building. The only exception to wearing a mask/face covering is when you are eating or drinking, or when alone in private spaces.

Q: Do I have to wear one when I am in a City vehicle?

A: You must wear a mask when in a City vehicle with another person. If you are alone, you may remove your mask.

Q: I am vaccinated, do I still need to wear a mask?

A: Yes, this protocol applies to all municipal employees of the City of Newton, regardless of vaccination status.

Q: I work in an area with other employees, but no members of the public have access to our work area. Do I still need to wear a mask?

A: Yes, you all must wear a mask/face covering when working, unless eating, drinking or when alone.

Q: Do I need to wear a mask when I am in a private employee break room, bathroom or other area where only employees can go?

A: Yes, you all must wear a mask/face covering when working, unless eating, drinking or when alone.

Q: I work outside, do I still need to wear a mask?

A: Yes, employees working outside must wear a mask/face covering when interacting directly with others when social distancing is not possible.

Q: I usually eat with my coworkers at lunch, do we need to keep our masks on when eating together?

A: If you are eating your lunch with your coworkers, you may remove your mask when eating or drinking. However, you should maintain an appropriate social distance while eating.

Q: What do I do if I need another face mask, will the City provide another one? Are there other resources for getting masks free or at a reduced cost?

A: If you are in need of another mask/face covering, please speak to your supervisor. The City will provide one additional reusable, washable, cloth face covering to employees who are in need of another mask. You can also buy mask/face coverings and file for reimbursement for the expense if you have a medical flexible spending account.